



County of San Luis Obispo • Public Health Department

2191 Johnson Avenue • P.O. Box 1489
San Luis Obispo, California 93406
805-781-5520 • FAX 805-781-1048

Penny Borenstein, M.D., M.P.H.
County Health Officer

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATION

May 14th, 2010

**To: Daycare Providers
Preschools**

CONTACT:

Christine Gaiger, S.P.H.N
Communicable Disease
Program Manager
805 – 781 – 5577

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Alert

The San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department continues to investigate pertussis cases in all areas of the County, with adults, adolescents and infants being diagnosed. Pertussis can be spread through the air when people cough. It often starts like a common cold, which then gets worse over the next 1-2 weeks. People with pertussis have coughing spells that may last several seconds. As they catch their breath at the end of each coughing spell, they may gasp loudly ("whoop") and vomit or choke. Infants may stop breathing or turn blue.

Children should receive vaccines for whooping cough at 2, 4, and 6 months of age, and then again at 15 months with a another booster between 4-6 years of age. However, even immunized children can get pertussis. Immunity to pertussis has been shown to wane 6-12 years after vaccination making adolescents and adults susceptible to pertussis infection even if they were immunized as a child.

Adolescents and adults continue to be the primary reservoir for transmission to infants who are too young to have received at least 3 doses of a pertussis-containing vaccine. The need to protect infants from pertussis infection is underscored by the fact that to date in 2005, there have been two pertussis cases among infants less than 4 months of age in San Luis Obispo County.

Two vaccines are available for preventing pertussis in adolescents and adults. Boostrix and Adacel are now available at the public health department; please call for further information or an appointment.

If you have children in your care who have symptoms of pertussis, persistent coughing or any of the symptoms listed above, please have the child evaluated by a medical provider immediately. If you, or family members have symptoms, please follow up with a medical provider immediately.

If you have any further questions, please contact the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department at (805) 781-5500 or the pertussis hotline at 788-2903 or visit the Public Health website at http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/health/publichealth/commddisease/SLO_PHD_Pertussis.htm.